

Serial No. 09/864,027

REMARKS

After further review of the final Office Action mailed December 2, 2003, and the Advisory Action mailed May 17, 2004, the Applicants submit a Request for Continued Examination and this Amendment. With regard to the Amendment, the Applicants amend claims 1, 4, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 22 to further define the power outlets of the present invention. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following comments, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of rejected claims 1-9 and 11-22.

The Examiner rejects claims 7-9 and 20-21 as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,080,014 to Steiler. As previously discussed, Steiler discloses a trailer circuit connector mount capable of connection with various standard trailer plug "configurations of from four to seven pins in various sizes and geometric arrangements" *Col. 1, ll. 18-28*. Additionally, at *col. 4, ll. 22-24*, Steiler states, "[t]he present invention is directed to an electrical connector unit that is particularly effective in *facilitating electrical connections between towed and towing vehicles*" (emphasis added). Consistent with this objective, Steiler refers to the electrical connector socket 16A described as "a conventional four-pin device" and one of the "standard plug configurations." *Col. 5, ll. 18-25*. Additionally, Steiler also describes the connector socket 16B "as a conventional six-pin device" and the connector socket 16C as a "heavy-duty seven-pin socket." *Col. 6, ll. 58-59 and 64. Every assembly cited in the Steiler patent includes four-pin, six-pin, or seven-pin standard connectors for electrically connecting a vehicle to a trailer.*

Serial No. 09/864,027

Nowhere does Steiler describe, contemplate, suggest, or provide any motivation to make the trailer hitch receiver of claims 7-9 and 20-21, having an AC power outlet "adapted to receive a standard two prong or three prong plug." Therefore, Applicants submit that Steiler does not anticipate these claims and the Examiner's rejection must be withdrawn. *See Hybritech Inc. v. Monoclonal Antibodies, Inc.*, 231 USPQ 81, 90 (Fed. Cir. 1986) (finding "[i]t is axiomatic that for prior art to anticipate under Section 102 it has to meet every element of the claimed invention. . ."). Additionally, by their dependency on what is now believed allowable claim 7, Applicants submit that claims 8, 9, and 14 must also be allowed. Next, the Examiner rejects claims 1-2, 4-5, 15-17 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,904,261 to Belinky et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,776,020 to Hughes. The Applicants reiterate that Belinky teaches an "electrical connector" as being "carried by a towing vehicle for communication of brake and turn signals from the towing vehicle to a trailer." Col 1, ll 12-15. Furthermore, Belinky explicitly refers to a "standard 7-way connector" and a "standard 6-way electrical connector." Col 2, ll 38-39 and 43-44. Belinky does not describe or provide any motivation to make a trailer hitch receiver with an AC power outlet adapted to receive a standard two prong or three prong plug, as required by amended claim 4. Moreover, Belinky makes no mention of a DC power outlet adapted to receive a single 12 volt power plug, as required by amended claims 1, 15, and 22.

Serial No. 09/864,027

Turning to the secondary reference, the Examiner argues that Hughes "teaches a trailer light plug (10) mateable with a plurality of trailer wiring harness connector receptacles and providing visual diagnostic indication observance by the user." *Office Action* p.4. However, the Applicant's invention makes no mention of "providing visual diagnostic indication." Additionally, Hughes only teaches an *adapter* for connecting between the electrical system of a vehicle and another apparatus, not the trailer light plug of Applicants' invention.

No matter how a skilled artisan might configure the trailer hitch of Belinky in combination with the adapter of Hughes, no such combination renders amended claims 1-2, 4-5, 15-17 and 22 obvious. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejection of these claims and their dependent claims 3 and 6 must be withdrawn.

With regard to claims 11, 13, and 18-19, as previously discussed, Belinky makes no mention of the power outlets of these claims. Additionally, contrary to the Examiner's statement, Hughes *does not* disclose a power inverter *on* the towing vehicle. In *Col. 4, ll. 37-47*, Hughes describes:

a series of at least two insulation displaced electrical conductors, or wires, and/or *at least one printed circuit board extend within and through said housing of the various adapter. . .[i]n addition, said printed circuit board* or PCB, may also include an additional circuitry such as a power or voltage converter

(emphasis added).

Serial No. 09/864,027

As evident from these statements, Hughes describes a power inverter located *within* the adapter, not on the towing vehicle as required by Applicants' claim 13. Since neither of these references disclose Applicants' invention and they provide no motivation to combine and modify the references as proposed by the Examiner, the rejection of these amended claims is improper and must be withdrawn. Moreover, by its dependency on what is now believed to be allowable subject matter, claim 12 must also be allowed.

It is now believed that the present application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, allowance of all claims of the application is respectfully requested. If any issues remain, however, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number of record in order to expedite the prosecution of this patent application. As noted on the enclosed Request for Continued Examination, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees relating to the Request for Continued Examination or resulting from this Amendment document, or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No.11-0978.

Respectfully submitted,

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Serial No. 09/864,027

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Date

June 15, 2004 *[Signature]*